

How to Love One Another, Part 3 - Romans 1:13-15 – February 6th, 2011

- Today's study is part three of a series we began about a month ago that I've entitled; "How to Love One Another."
- The reason for that title, of this series, is that here in the text it becomes abundantly clear that the Apostle Paul truly loved these people.
- Now, if you're anything like me, you probably see the Apostle Paul as being this hard driving evangelist with unflinching fearlessness.
- While that may have certainly been who and how Paul was, I believe that he was also a very loving man, in that he truly loved people.
- With that as the backdrop, he becomes an example to us, in how he by the Holy Spirit teaches us, what loving one another looks like.

1. By being faithful to one another (Verse 8)

- Paul expresses his thanks to God through Christ for all in Rome because their faith was being reported all over the world.
- One reason news of them had spread, was because Rome was a most difficult place to not only be in the faith, but to remain faithful.
- The message I communicate when I'm faithful is; "I love you." Conversely, the message I communicate when unfaithful is; "I love self."

2. By praying for one another (Verses 9-10)

- Paul then says; "as God is his witness, he constantly remembers them, continually prays for them, and that he longs come to them."
- It's because Paul loved them much, that he prayed for them much, and the more he prayed for them, the more love he had for them.
- The lesson here is quite clear, in that we only pray for people we love, which is probably why the one we pray for the most is our self.

3. By giving to one another (Verse 11)

- Paul tells them how he longs to see them, so that he may impart to them, some spiritual gift with the hopes it will strengthen them.

4. By encouraging one another (Verse 12)

- Paul expounds on why he longs to see them by saying that he hopes both he and they may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.

5. By accepting one another (Verses 13-14)

(13) I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles. (14) I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish.

- v13 Paul wants them to be aware of how he'd planned many times to come to them in order that he might have a harvest among them.
- v14 He says the harvest will be as with the other Gentiles because he's obligated to both Greeks and non-Greeks and the wise and the foolish.
- Here's what I'm thinking Paul wants them to know that he deems it his obligation to accept anyone so he can have a harvest among everyone.

Jon Courson in his commentary put it best this way; "I'm a debtor to everyone," said Paul—"to the Greek and to the barbarian, to the sophisticated and to the simple, to the businessman and to the biker, to the housewife and to the hippie, to the jock and to the jailbird." Why did Paul feel this way? Because he was amazed at the goodness of God that saved him so radically at the very time he was erring so greatly.

Charles Spurgeon "His office and his gifts placed him in debt to mankind to labor for their conversion and every Christian, according to his ability, is in the same condition. Are we paying the debts under which the Lord has laid upon us?

- Here's the take away from these two verses; my love for people will be predicated upon and proportionate to, my willingness to accept people.
- This is the why behind the what that Paul is writing; he himself had been the recipient of God's love when he met the Savior 25 years prior.
- Because the Lord would accept him and save him, he's now obligated to bring the gospel to them, that he might have a harvest among them.
- When you're the recipient of some bit of good news don't you want to share it with the ones who are closest to you? This is what Paul is doing.
- I'll take it a step further and say that you would even have a sense of obligation to do so. However, we only share it with those whom we love.

Romans 13:8 NKJV Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

- Here's a question, and I am asking it of myself; "how are we going to meet our obligation to love one another, except we accept one another?"
- The problem is, we won't meet our obligation to accept one another, because we think that it's our obligation to find the faults in one another.
- We don't need police in the body of Christ, we need paramedics. Police, as the law, find who's at fault, paramedics minister care to the injured.

6. By taking risks for one another (Verse 15)

(15) That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome.

- v15 Paul tells them that this is why he is so ready, and so eager to reach them, and also preach the gospel to them, who are there in Rome.
- One can't help but feel the passion, the intensity, and the boldness in "how" Paul says "what" he says, in his unflinching fearlessness.
- Much is missed in the written letter of God's Word. Would to God we had the emotion and passion of how it was written, as if it were spoken.
- Make no mistake about it, Paul was a risk taker for Jesus Christ, because of his love for Jesus Christ Who first loved him, while yet in his sin.
- It's vital we understand how serious and even dangerous it was for Paul to go to Rome, let alone for anyone to be a Christian living in Rome.

Charles Spurgeon "He was not afraid of danger, and was willing to come right under the palace walls of Caesar. In due time his desire became a fact."

- His desire to go and take this risk, was fueled by his love for God, and his love for God's people. We will risk our lives for those whom we love.
- In an instant, any fear of danger is quieted, even muted by the love we have for another. To risk our life for another is the measure of our love.

John 15:13 KJV Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Rome was the center of the Gentile world: its emperors were soon to demand—and receive—worship; it was crowded with men of learning and culture from the whole world; it had mighty marchings;—great triumphal processions flowed through its streets. Rome shook the world. Yet here is Paul, utterly weak in himself, and' with his physical thorn; yet ready, eager, to go, to *Rome!* ... Talk of your brave men, your great men, O world! Where in all history can you find one like Paul. Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, marched with the protection of their armies to enforce their will upon men. Paul was eager to march with Christ alone to the center of this world's greatness entrenched under Satan, with "the Word of the cross," which he himself says is "to Jews, an offence; and to Gentiles, foolishness." Yes, and when he does go to Rome, it is as a shipwrecked (though Divinely delivered) prisoner. Oh, what a story! ...And what is the secret of this unconquerable heart? Hear Paul: "Ye seek a proof of *Christ* that speaketh in me." "To me, to live is *Christ*"; "It was the good pleasure of God to reveal *His Son in me*"; "By the grace of God I am what I am"; "I labor, striving according to *Christ's working, who worketh in me mightily*"; "I am ready to spend and be spent out for your souls."

William R. Newell

- If I have this kind of love, I will become for me, the motivation that propels me, to spend and be spent for another, proportionately.
- In other words, the degree to which I am motivated to risk my life for another, will be directly related to how much I love others.
- While I believe that fear and hate are a powerful motivator, love is the more powerful motivator. Perhaps this humorous illustration says it best:

Boudreaux live across de bayou from Clarence who he don like at all. Dey all de time yell across de bayou at each other. Boudreaux would yell to Clarence, "If I had a way to cross dis bayou, I'd come over dere an beat you up good, yeah!" Dis went on for years. Finally de state done built a bridge across dat bayou right by dere houses and Boudreaux's wife, Marie, say, "Now is you chance, Boudreaux. Why don you go over dere and beat up dat Clarence like you say?" Boudreaux say, "OK," and start across de bridge, but he sees a sign on de bridge an he stop to read it and den he go back home. Marie say, "Why you back so soon?" And Boudreaux say, "Marie, I dun change my mind 'bout beatin' up dat Clarence. You know, Marie, dey got a sign on dat dere bridge what say "Clarence 13 ft. 6 in." You know, he don look near dat big when I yell at him from across de bayou."

- The moral of the story is: Hate and fear may motivate me, but love is a greater motivator, in that I will not only cross de bayou, I'd risk ma life and swim shok infested wata's fa you, if I love you!

- Early church historian and theologian Tertullian once quoted a pagan author who wrote of his astonishment at the love Christians of his day had for one another.
- He writes; "See how they love one another, ...how they are ready even to die for one another, for they themselves will sooner put to death."